

RADIATION PROTECTION ADVISER CERTIFICATION SCHEME
RPA4: Instructions and guidance for the renewal of RPA certification

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1 INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Background

- (i) The HSE Statement on RPAs (September 2021) indicates that any individual wishing to act as Radiation Protection Adviser (RPA) under the Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 must either:
 - hold a valid certificate from an assessing body recognised by HSE; or
 - hold a National Vocational Qualification or Scottish Vocational Qualification (N/SVQ) at level 4 in Radiation Protection Practice that was issued not more than five years previously.
- (ii) Certificates awarded by assessing bodies must state that the individual has satisfied the assessing body that they possess the core competence needed to be an RPA. A certificate is normally valid for no more than five years. This means that all individuals wishing to continue to act as RPAs need to renew their certificate of competence at intervals not exceeding five years whether they were initially certificated by RPA 2000, some another assessing body recognised by HSE, or through the N/SVQ route.
- (iii) To achieve renewal of certification, RPAs must provide evidence to an assessing body demonstrating that they have kept their knowledge of radiation protection legislation and of developments in radiation protection practice up to date. of The HSE Statement states that, as well as work examples, acceptable evidence may include keeping up to date on the application of the Ionising Radiations Regulations, reading relevant scientific or other journals, taking part in appropriate discussion groups and private study, as well as attendance at courses, HSE events, RPA update meetings, scientific seminars, etc. Acceptable evidence may also be derived from membership of a recognised and appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme.
- (iv) It is expected that advice on IRRs (and REPPIR where relevant) will form the bulk of the evidence for the review. Simulated evidence of advice to employers may be submitted for those seeking renewal following a career break or similar.
- (v) The preferred, and optimal route, to renewal of certification is to apply for recertification using the application form RPA3: “Application for the Renewal of RPA Certification”. However, it is open to individuals to repeat the full initial certification process by submitting a new portfolio of evidence and following the same process as for their initial certification (RPA1).

1.2 Overview of the renewal process

The renewal of RPA Certification by RPA 2000 is based primarily on the demonstration of continuing professional development during the period of validity of the original certificate; it is a CPD scheme with all of its content being directly applicable to renewal of certification under the Ionising Radiations Regulations and in compliance with the HSE Statement. The points gained under these arrangements are generally also applicable to other (radiation related) CPD schemes.

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1.3 CPD for RPA certificate renewal

- (i) Participation in active CPD for the renewal of RPA Certification involves identifying work and training and development activities undertaken that positively demonstrate that you have maintained:
- a clear understanding of the role of an RPA, which is to advise employers on compliance with IRR17 (and REPPiR where relevant)
 - detailed understanding of IRR17 and any amendments to IRR17, either direct or via other legislation
 - general awareness of other related legislative developments (e.g. REPPiR, IRMER, transport legislation etc.)
 - general awareness of technological advances relevant to radiation protection practice
- (ii) Significant emphasis should be placed on practical experience of RPA work.
- (iii) Regular participation in RPA update events (and similar) is the most effective way to keep up to date with new or revised legislation and the interpretation of that legislation.
- (iv) Items of evidence that satisfy the above criteria qualify for renewal “points”. You should maintain/compile a record of qualifying activities and the corresponding points gained over a five-year period (the period of validity of an RPA certificate).

1.4 Appropriate work activities

1.4.1 Identified work activities

The “Points Record” sheets in Part 4 of RPA3: “Application for the renewal of an RPA Certificate” provide a comprehensive schedule of work activities that would be acceptable to RPA 2000 assessors, but it is up to the applicant to indicate and justify the points being claimed. This schedule is not intended to be exhaustive, and you may include any other work activities that you regard as appropriate.

The identified work activities are separated into two categories:

- Category 1: Learning based activities (and subsequently 3 sub-categories)
- Category 2: Competence based activities (and subsequently 5 sub-categories)

1.4.2 Other work activities

You may include any other work activities that you regard as being relevant to those aspects of operational radiation protection that are of direct significance to the role and function of an RPA and in accordance with any relevant HSE guidance. However, you must evaluate such activities in a manner that is consistent with the points allocated to the identified work activities – ie typically 1 point per hour of relevant activity.

1.5 Record of CPD and application for renewal of certification

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1.5.1 Application documentation

The application form and points record form sections are combined in document RPA3; this has been designed to help you structure your evidence and record and summarise your qualifying points. It is in your interest to follow a) the structure of the forms and b) the guidance presented in this document as a consistent approach greatly facilitates the work of the assessor.

1.5.2 Evidence

Since RPA renewal of certification is a legal requirement, all claims for qualifying points must be supported by some form of evidence. Suitable evidence includes:

- Training course programmes, with the applicant's participation simply highlighted (e.g. as a student, lecturer or organiser) and, preferably, an attendance certificate.
- Short, concise extracts from reports, documents, etc, identifying your role.
- Brief descriptions of CPD related activities, with a brief justification for the points claimed (preferably by means of a direct comparison with the identified work activities).

More detailed guidance can be found in each of the tables in Part 4 of RPA3.

1.5.3 Qualifying Points

- (i) To achieve renewal of RPA certification (for a further five-year period) you must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of RPA 2000 assessors, the acquisition of at least 100 appropriate points over the range of work and training and development activities undertaken over the preceding five-year period. Note that:
 - At least 25 points must be gained from Category 1 (learning based activities),
 - At least 25 points must be gained from Category 2 (competence-based activities)
- (ii) Applicants are strongly advised to submit evidence in support of greater than the required minimum of 100 points as this enables assessors to award renewal of certification without further reference to you, should they have cause to question the absolute validity of some of the points that you are claiming. A target of 125-150 (max) points is suggested; please be selective in the choice of evidence and aim for quality over quantity.
- (iii) Only points gained within the five-year period of CPD can count towards renewal of certification. Surplus points cannot be carried forward to the following five-year renewal of certification period.

1.5.4 CPD cycle

The five-year period of CPD should be scheduled to end 6-3 months prior to the end of the validity of your current RPA certificate and the application for renewal should be submitted to RPA 2000 as soon as possible after this. There should then be adequate time for RPA 2000 to assess the application and either to issue a new certificate or progress any necessary enquiries to you. To ensure that your certification does not lapse, applications for renewal of certification must be received by RPA 2000 not later than 3 months prior to the expiry date of your current certificate.

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Note: RPA 2000 is able to extend the validity of current certificates in certain circumstances.

1.5.5 Authentication of application:

The application must be authenticated (signed) by a suitable person who is acquainted with your work. This will generally be your line manager or another work colleague with good knowledge of your work.

2 EVIDENCE, GUIDANCE & POINTS RECORD

2.1 Introduction

- (i) CPD points can only be gained from those work activities that are consistent with the HSE Statement on RPAs. Appropriate activities are grouped under two categories:
 - Category 1: Learning based activities (from which at least 25 points must be gained).
 - Category 2: Competence based activities (from which at least 25 points must be gained).
- (ii) You are advised to submit evidence in support of greater than the minimum 100 points required to gain renewal of certification and a target of 125-150(max) points is suggested.
- (iii) Under Category 1 activities, regular participation at RPA-specific courses, webinars and professional society conferences is a preferred route to gain points. In-house training and meetings are also acceptable if they convey learning. However, applicants who find it difficult to attend courses may provide evidence in the form of private study and relevant examples of learning from within their workplace experience. Category 1 activities are associated with *receiving* the learning, i.e. attending courses etc. as a student. Lecturing and teaching activities appear under Category 2.
- (iv) Under Category 2 activities, applicants who spend a significant amount of time directly on RPA work will gain many points under sub-category 2.1. Applicants who are not so clearly involved in direct RPA work would be expected to gain points from elsewhere within Category 2. Those working in a similar way to RPAs but who are not “appointed” may submit actual work which has contributed to the advice of an appointed RPA, or simulated evidence, in sub-category 2.2. There are different tables for different types of activities such as RPA activities, similar activities, presentation of a lecture, presentation on developments of radiation protection and other. The final category can be used for participation in the wider support of radiation protection - such as professional society and working group activities etc.
- (v) Evidence presented in each of the tables for Category 1 and 2 activities should be preceded/supported by a short contextual explanation. For example, if 7 points are claimed for an RPA update meeting in Category 1.1, the applicant should identify why this this case. Similarly, the basis for claiming points in Categories 1.2 and 1.3 should be outlined. If points are claimed in Category 2 other than for Category 2.1, the applicant should, where appropriate, identify why the evidence deserves to be considered as ‘novel’ or ‘established’. In the case of Category 2.1, a narrative should be provided explaining the applicant's role in

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the provision of routine advice, supported by a small number of examples of advice given on IRR compliance, ideally relating to a topic requiring Detailed Understanding, as defined in the HSE’s RPA Statement. The applicant should also provide a justification for the number of hours per week being claimed.

2.2 General guidance

- (i) Ideally, download document RPA3 from the RPA 2000 website early on in your CPD cycle, update it regularly and (if you can) maintain electronic copies of the supporting evidence. Redact and shorten the evidence as appropriate.
- (ii) Once you have completed gathering your evidence, review your evidence to look for a good balance across a selection of key documents that demonstrate advice across multiple regulations (those listed under “detailed understanding” in Annex 3 of the HSE Statement).
- (iii) When ready, print off and submit hard copies of Parts 1, 2, 3 and the tables in Part 4 with each claim supported by appropriate evidence (also hard copy).

2.3 Accumulating points

- (i) It is stressed that in the Points Record (RPA3) the points stated for an 'event' are the maximum that may be claimed. The actual value claimed should be based on your own judgement of the value of the 'event' in maintaining and/or strengthening your continuing competence to act as an RPA. For example, for attendance at meetings, typically no more than 1 point per hour of relevant content. A brief justification for the number of points being claimed will assist the Assessors.
- (ii) You are advised to submit evidence that totals an additional 25% of the total points required in case a number of points are not agreed by the assessor.
- (iii) The Points Record contains a range of identified work activities that would be acceptable to RPA 2000 assessors. You should use as many or as few of the identified work activities as are relevant to your application. Some sub-categories may remain blank.
- (iv) The identified work activities are only intended as examples and other activities may be included, in which case you should evaluate the points appropriate to each additional activity, using the existing examples as a guide. For example, some applicants may serve on committees where part of the business is directly associated with the role of an RPA, in which case an appropriate number of points could be claimed under sub-category 2.5.
- (v) When selecting the work activities that contribute to your points total, please aim to be selective and submit those for which you have the strongest evidence. Most assessors will welcome a portfolio that is straightforward to assess.
- (vi) The Points Record tables have been presented with 8 rows, which should be sufficient in most cases. Should you have more items than fit a table, please simply add a continuation table and follow on sequentially with the reference numbers of each item. If you have fewer than 8 items, consider deleting the rows.
- (vii) In all the Tables, the shaded columns are intended for use by the assessor; you should leave them blank.

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2.4 Security of information

- (i) Portfolio evidence should not normally be security classified for either commercial or security reasons, principally because this would mean that such portfolios would have to be suitably safeguarded while in the possession of RPA 2000. However, some assessors have been OCNS vetted and, in specially agreed circumstances, would be able to examine any such evidence. You are responsible for minimising the commercial/security classifications of your portfolio using your own organisation's clearance arrangements. Information that is sensitive for either commercial or security reasons should, where practicable, be limited to 'Official' or an equivalent classification. Should you have concerns on such matters, you should blank out/redact information that you do not wish to disclose.
- (ii) If the above limits the value of the document as evidence and no alternative evidence can be provided, RPA 2000 must be consulted to agree suitable safeguard arrangements before the portfolio is submitted. RPA 2000 reserves the right to levy additional charges to cover the cost of additional security requirements beyond 'Official' or an equivalent classification.
- (iii) Evidence should never contain information that could compromise the security of radioactive materials.
- (iv) Evidence should also not be submitted on DVD or USB as these can cause a security risk. If there is a need to submit evidence via removable media, then please contact the scheme administrators at RPA 2000.

2.5 Managing your RPA certificate renewal

- (i) Try to plan your CPD timeframe so that the five-year period ends 6-3months before the expiry date of your current RPA Certificate.
- (ii) Ensure that your application for renewal of certification reaches RPA 2000 at least 3 months prior to the expiry date of your current certificate. If you do this and there are any delays in the assessment process, it may be possible for RPA 2000 to extend your current certificate for a short period.
- (iii) You should be pre-planning your programme for achieving sufficient points to gain renewal of certification. Ideally you should have a broad overall plan for the five years, with more detailed plans for the coming twelve-month period.
- (iv) Ideally, you should add to your portfolio of potential evidence regularly over the full five years

If you experience any problems with the renewal process, please feed this information back to admin@rpa2000.org.uk, together with any suggestions for improvements.

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